

# Assemblyman **PAUL KORETZ**

## **Forty-second Assembly District**

*proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 16, 2004**

**Contacts:**

**Teresa Stark 916-319-2042**

**Anna Forbes 202-822-0033**

## **Koretz Applauds Durex Condoms for Removing Nonoxynol-9**

*Spermicide Coated Condoms Increase Risk of Contracting HIV, FDA Fails to Act*

**Sacramento & Washington, DC** – Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) and Anna Forbes, Global North Programs Coordinator for the Global Campaign for Microbicides based in Washington, DC, today commended Durex Consumer Products for announcing they have stopped production of condoms coated with Nonoxynol-9 also known as N-9.

“Durex has put the health of their customers ahead of profits and market share; and in so doing, they have protected the integrity of their brand. I commend Durex Consumer Products for responding to the compelling evidence that spermicide coated condoms are a risk to public health,” said Assemblyman Koretz.

“The fastest way to get people to stop using N-9 condoms is to simply take them off the shelves,” said Anna Forbes. Since June 2002, The Global Campaign for Microbicides has worked to convince the FDA and condom manufacturers through negotiation and public pressure to end production of condoms with N-9 spermicide. “Our message has been to affirm the correct and consistent use of regular condoms as effective against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, but to discourage the use of N-9 coated condoms as a health risk with no proven benefit of additional protection against pregnancy,” Forbes added.

Durex joins a host of other condoms and personal lubricant manufacturers that have stopped making products with Nonoxynol-9 including Mayer Laboratories, the makers of Kimono and Maxx condoms, and Johnson & Johnson, the makers of KY products.

Until recently, N-9 was believed to be an effective chemical barrier against HIV and a variety of other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Recent studies published by the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and numerous peer-reviewed medical journals have concluded that N-9 not only does not help prevent STIs, it may actually increase the risk of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. One study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology found that women whose partners use N-9 condoms are approximately 3 times more likely to contract a urinary tract infection than women who use regular condoms.

In March 2003 Koretz introduced Assembly Joint Resolution 16 urging the FDA, manufacturers, and retailers to end the production and sale of N-9 condoms while preserving the use of N-9 as an over-the-counter vaginal spermicide until safer replacement can be developed.

With the support of Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson and a coalition of health policy organizations that included the Global Campaign for Microbicides, Koretz brought national media attention to the N-9 issue and to the condom industry's refusal to accept a negotiated phase-out of N-9 condoms. Koretz also convinced

**-more-**

Assemblyman  
**PAUL KORETZ**

**Forty-second Assembly District**

*proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks*



Press Release Page 2

California's highest ranking public health official, Health Services Director Diana M. Bontá, R.N., Dr.P.H., to send a letter to the Commissioner of the FDA calling for the removal of N-9 from condoms.

"The FDA has had the WHO data showing the dangers of N-9 condoms since June 2002. Today, I once again call on FDA Commissioner Dr. Mark McClellan to take action to end the production and sale of N-9 coated condoms," said Koretz.

"The only major brands still manufacturing spermicide coated condoms are Trojan and Lifestyles. It's time they took responsible action to protect the health of their customers by ending Nonoxynol-9 condom production immediately," said Forbes.

"The makers of Trojan and Lifestyles benefit from millions of public and private funds spent promoting condom use in the effort to prevent HIV infections. How dare they become part of the AIDS problem and not part of the solution," exclaimed Koretz.

In addition to efforts in California, advocates in the states of Washington and Pennsylvania have successfully lobbied health officials to take action with warnings on a public health web site and by stopping the distribution of N-9 condoms for the purpose of STI prevention. Drug store chains around the country have been asked to stop selling condoms with spermicide through an effort by The Global Campaign for Microbicides. Similar efforts targeting manufacturers, retailers, and public health officials are underway in Canada and the United Kingdom.

###